

Appendix G

Historic Resources Management Plan for The Virginia Stranahan Memorial Town Forest

Introduction

The Stranahan Forest's historic and cultural resources are the tangible reminders that we are not the first people on this land. Historic resources remind us that earlier generations of Native peoples and Euro-American settlers continually adapted to changing environments, climates, technologies, and economic and social patterns. Knowing about the past and the people that came before us is important to help us plan for the future.

The Virginia Stranahan Memorial Town Forest's (Stranahan Forest) historic resources are important to members of the Marshfield Historical Society, to Marshfield residents of all ages, and to the greater central Vermont community. The Stranahan Forest's current uses, including sustainable agriculture, forestry, animal habitat, hunting, recreation, and educational programs, are compatible with preserving the Stranahan Forest's historic resources. Recreational opportunities, such as cross-country skiing, snowmobiling on the VAST trail, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and educational programming can foster greater appreciation for and enjoyment of the historic resources.

The Stranahan Forest's Management plan and objectives offer many opportunities for integrating historic resources into other SF priorities. For example, surface water protections such as Surface Water Buffer Zones and Special Protected Areas will help protect potential Native American Pre-Contact resources that may never be discovered and inventoried.

Clusters of historic resources with important values for preservation, interpretation, education, and research may be designated and mapped as "special management areas." Special Management Areas will receive a high level of protection from activities that have the potential for damaging them, such as timber harvesting and recreational development. Special Management Areas shall retain minimal trails for pedestrian access and enjoyment.

Historic and Cultural Resources in the Stranahan Forest

Use of the Stranahan Forest possibly dates from the earliest Native settlements in Vermont, at about 12,600 years ago. The Winooski River was an important travel corridor for this long period of time, enabling early Vermonters to access a rich array of upland foods and plant and animal resources for other necessities of pre-Contact life. Some of the Stranahan Forest's diverse natural water features, including streams, headwaters, wetlands, vernal pools and a waterfall, may have been attractive to Native Vermonters for thousands of years. Although Pre-Contact Native American campsites and other use sites have not yet been discovered in the Stranahan Forest, today's Forest users can nonetheless imagine that people have used this forest for hundreds of generations before us.

Research confirms that between 1840 and 1940 over one hundred and ten people lived on the land in what is now the Stranahan Forest. The Forest's existing inventory of historic resources includes a minimum of six house sites, two sugar houses, an up-and-down sawmill, and miles of stone walls. Each of the Stranahan Forest's 19th century "house sites" are visible today as a single foundation (or cellar hole). However, that foundation was part of a much larger, human-modified, landscape. A typical 19th century farm might include a farmhouse, outhouse, one or more barns, other outbuildings, gardens, wells and cistern connected by log or clay pipe water system, dumps and refuse pits, a sugar arch or shack, lanes and roads, orchards, pastures, fencing of various kinds (including stone walls), animal pounds, and cemeteries or grave sites for family members.

Today, the house or barn foundation and stone walls are often the most, or only, visible parts of that original farmstead and farm. Most of the farm site's historic features and archeological deposits that can tell the story of the farm and its occupants over the decades of occupancy lie beyond the foundation. Historic apple orchards continue to grow near the farmstead foundations. Other historic landscape features such as sugaring sites and associated historic tools and equipment, stone cairns, stone quarries, kilns, dams, mill ponds, raceways, and culverts may exist in the Forest.

Management Objectives

- Inventory, document, preserve, and interpret historic resources in the Stranahan Forest.
- Integrate historic resources management objectives and actions with those of other Stranahan Forest resources to the greatest extent possible to foster cross-resource appreciation and compatible goals and actions.
- Enhance the educational and recreational opportunities of the Stranahan Forest through its historic resources.
- Use the Stranahan Forest's historic resources to foster appreciation of Marshfield's local history, for example, by creating hands-on educational opportunities for K-12 students to enrich their knowledge and understanding of local history and the environment.
- Maintain healthy and productive apple orchards and encourage our community to pick from and enjoy these survivors from the past.

Management Actions

All management actions will be coordinated with the Stranahan Forest Stewardship Committee and the Marshfield Historical Society.

1. Inventory and document any visible historic resources through intensive surface survey of the Stranahan Forest when leaves are off the trees and the ground is snow-free. This is a multi-year project. See list of Additional Resources for some sources of useful information.

- Conduct more detailed mapping of historic resources, including delineation of historic dumps and sugaring areas.
 - Conduct additional historic research on identified resources to enhance knowledge of the sites and their interpretation.
 - Request that the VT Division for Historic Preservation assign site numbers and enter the historic resources into the Vermont Archaeological Inventory.
 - Integrate educators and age-appropriate classes from Twinfield Union School into these projects and create educational opportunities for K-12 students.
 - Incorporate community members into the projects.
 - Recruit community educators to develop and integrate educational programs into the inventory and documentation efforts.
 - Host community tours on-site and community meetings off-site to report on current projects and success stories.
2. Conduct remote survey of the Stranahan Forest using one-foot Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology.
- Work with the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to recruit a geography student at one of Vermont's colleges or University of Vermont to conduct this survey. This could be done as a paid summer internship or for-credit school project.
 - Map all potential features on Geographic Information Systems (GIS). See Management Action 1.
 - Field check all potential features and document new historic resources.
 - Integrate newly identified historic resources into the Stranahan Forest map.
3. Designate and map clusters of historic resources with important values for preservation, interpretation, education, and research as "special management areas." Special Management Areas will be treated as "no-disturb-zones." Special Management Areas will receive a high level of protection from activities that have the potential for damaging them, such as timber harvesting and recreational development. Signage and benches or picnic tables are allowed.
- Special Management Areas shall retain minimal trails for pedestrian access and enjoyment.
 - Select tree cutting and removal may be allowed if beneficial to preserving and interpreting a special management area.
 - Where appropriate, consider removal of secondary growth around historic farmsteads and establishment of perennial grasses to help define and stabilize farmstead and former dwelling sites. Such sites are also enhanced by the release of apple trees which helps restore integrity to historic farmsteads. Maple sugar groves (sap orchards), where they are discernible, can be maintained by thinning and clearing dead wood, undergrowth and competing species.

4. Discourage personal collecting in historic dumps and of other man-made surface objects, such as sugaring buckets, scrap metal, bottles, stoves, household items, etc., as they all contribute to our understanding of the Stranahan Forest's past uses.

5. Integrate best management practices for protecting historic resources when planning and implementing timber harvesting. "Damage to historic sites is rarely intentional; most often it is accidental and occurs when operators do not know the site locations or their value" (*Guidance for Logging Jobs in Lyme, NH*. 2009). The following best practices for timber harvesting were collaboratively developed by the VT Division for Historic Preservation and the VT Agency of Natural Resources/Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation.

- Flag the historic resource and create a protective buffer around it. Show the logging contractor and crew the locations of all historic features within cutting areas. Discuss protection measures with all who will work on the site before harvesting begins. Ensure that the historic character of the resource is not altered during harvesting and can still be interpreted after harvesting is completed.
 - Do not pile or burn slash in or near cellar holes.
 - Avoid damage to stone walls and historic culverts. If stone walls must be crossed, use existing openings where possible. Limit the number of crossings and cut out only the minimum width needed. Store the removed stone next to the wall so it can be replaced later. Avoid skidding over a stone-faced culvert, or use a deck to cover it, if necessary.
 - Protect trees that are associated with historic resources (cellar holes, mill, etc). Protect witness trees. Flag trees such as paired maples that were planted in dooryards or plantings such as lilacs to protect them during harvesting or road building.
 - Plan operations near an historic resource in advance. Decide with the project forester and contractor whether special equipment or directional felling are needed to work near the site. Decide if a restricted log length is needed to protect certain areas. If a tree must be removed even though it is close to an historic feature (such as a rock-lined well), consider using fabric mats to cover the feature and/or using small equipment or horses to winch logs away from the site to minimize disturbance.
 - Place landings, yards, skid trails, and access roads away from historic resources. Use pre-existing skid trails and woods roads whenever possible.
6. Create a trails brochure (with maps) that incorporates historic resources and natural resources information. For example, see the popular brochure that the VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation created for [Little River State Park](#) in Waterbury. The brochure will emphasize the "take nothing but photos, leave only footprints" philosophy.
7. Create interpretive signage along Stranahan Forest trails and elsewhere that tells the stories of the people who lived on this land, its agricultural history, other historical uses, and describes the forest's natural features.

8. Develop educational programs for the community and beyond that foster a greater appreciation of history, culture, nature, and the environment for people of all ages.
 - Conduct historic resource tours in the spring or fall (September is Vermont Archaeology Month) to share new information and project updates with the community. Invite educators with the goal of inspiring them to participate in historic resource projects in the Stranahan Forest and create educational programs for their students.
 - Invite Native American experts to conduct on-site educational programming on Native use of forest resources, such as traditional use of certain tree and plant species.
9. Identify opportunities to integrate the Stranahan Forest's historic resources into relevant action plans and action steps set out in "[*Revitalizing All Marshfield and Plainfield: RAMP into the Future. Report and Action Plan*](#)" to help make the historic resources as relevant as possible to the community's present and future.
10. Any archaeological investigations that disturb the ground and that may involve recovery of artifacts must be conducted under the guidance of a professional archaeologist and approved by the Selectboard and performed under the direction of the Marshfield Historical Society.
11. Restore the apple orchards and improve access to them. Identify the types of apples growing in the orchards. These apple trees represent hardy heirloom varieties. Invite community members to events around apple harvesting.

Acknowledgements

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Virginia Stranahan Memorial Town Forest Management Plan. Adopted by the Selectboard of Marshfield, Vermont. Revised April 5, 2016.

The Historic Resources Management Plan incorporates “best practices” that result from long time collaborative efforts between archaeologists at the VT Division for Historic Preservation and foresters in the VT Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation.

These best practices are found in [Stewardship and Best Practices Guide for Historic and Archaeological Resources on Forest Land](https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/HP/2017%20Stewardship%20Guide%20Forest%20Lands.pdf). Montpelier, Vermont (July 2017), online at <https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/HP/2017%20Stewardship%20Guide%20Forest%20Lands.pdf>; and on pages 28 – 31 in [Stonewalls and Cellarholes: A Guide for Landowners on Historic Features and Landscapes in Vermont's Forests](https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/HP/stonewalls%20and%20cellarholes.pdf), VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Waterbury, Vermont (revised 1995), online at <https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/HP/stonewalls%20and%20cellarholes.pdf>

[Guidance for Logging Jobs in Lyme, NH](https://lymehistorians.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/guidance-for-loggers.pdf) (2009) excerpts some key recommendations from the above documents. Online at <https://lymehistorians.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/guidance-for-loggers.pdf>

Additional Resources

[Stonewalls and Cellarholes: A Guide for Landowners on Historic Features and Landscapes in Vermont's Forests](https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/HP/stonewalls%20and%20cellarholes.pdf), VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Waterbury, Vermont (revised 1995) provides more detailed information on historic resources found in New England’s woods and fields. Online at <https://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/HP/stonewalls%20and%20cellarholes.pdf>

The VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation has worked with archaeological consultants to create historic resources management plans for many of the state forests and other lands. These plans can provide ideas and inspiration for expanding on this basic historic resources plan. One plan example is [The Cultural Landscape of the Camel's Hump Management Unit in the Towns of Duxbury and Fayston, Washington County and Bolton, Richmond and Huntington, Chittenden County, Vermont: Historic Resource Summary, Historic Context Development and Prioritization of Known and Expected Historic Resources](#), by

Stephen R. Scharoun, and Ellen R. Cowie. Archaeology Research Center, Department of Social Sciences and Business, University of Maine at Farmington, Farmington, Maine (January 2007). Online at

https://fpr.vermont.gov/sites/fpr/files/State_Lands_Administration/Lands_Management_Planing/Library/CHMU_LRMP_APPENDIX%20C-CHMU%20historical%20report.pdf

Numerous historic maps for further research are available through the VT Agency of Digital Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information. [Historic Maps](#). Online at <https://vcgi.vermont.gov/maps/historic-maps>

Vermont's communities, landowners, non-profits, and students often use [map-making tools and resources](#) available through the VT Agency of Digital Services, Vermont Center for Geographic Information. Online at <https://vcgi.vermont.gov/maps/historic-maps>

State of Vermont, Vermont Open Geodata Portal. [Vermont Data – LIDAR 1' Contours](#). Online at <https://geodata.vermont.gov/datasets/c58c5b567f6f4f5b95a2accf3e3d5f97>

VT Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. [Little River State Park History Hike](#). Online at <https://vtstateparks.com/assets/pdf/little-river-history-hike.pdf>

Vermont Council on Rural Development. [Revitalizing All Marshfield and Plainfield: RAMP into the Future. Report and Action Plan](#). March 2020. Montpelier. Online at <https://www.vtrural.org/sites/default/files/TheRAMPMcReport.pdf>